Claims:

1. Use of an agent capable of inhibiting SAP ligand binding activity or depleting SAP from the plasma of a subject for the production of a medicament for treatment or prevention of osteoarthritis in the subject.

2. Use according to claim 1, wherein the agent is capable of being bound by a ligand binding site present on SAP.

3. Use according to claim 2, wherein the agent comprises a plurality of ligands covalently co-linked so as to form a complex with SAP and a second protein, wherein at least two of the ligands are the same or different, one of which is capable of being bound by a ligand binding site present on SAP and another is capable of being bound by a ligand binding site present on the second protein.

4. Use according to claim 3, wherein the second protein is SAP.

5. Use according to claim 3 or claim 4, wherein the ligands are covalently co-linked by a linker.

6. Use according to claim 5, wherein the linker comprises a linear or branched hydrocarbylene in which one or more of the carbon atoms thereof is optionally substituted by a heteroatom.

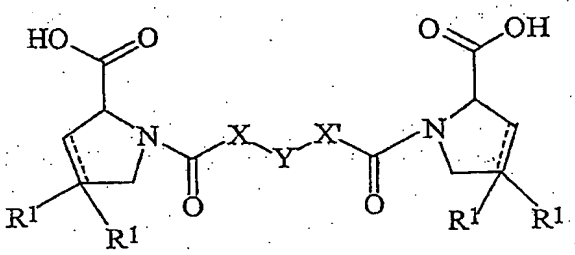
7. Use according to any preceding claim, wherein the agent has two ligands.

8. Use according to claim 6, wherein the agent has the general structure:

Ligand – linker – Ligand

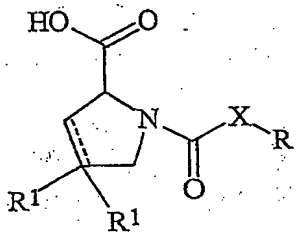
9. Use according to any of claims 3 to 8, wherein the ligand capable of being bound by a ligand binding site on SAP comprises a substituted or unsubstituted D-proline or stereoanalogue thereof.

10. Use according to claim 9, wherein the agent is a D-proline of the formula



I-A

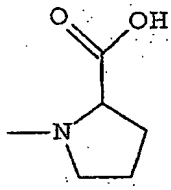
or



I-B

wherein

R is



the group ;

R^1 is hydrogen or halogen;

X is- $(CH_2)_n$-; $-CH(R^2)(CH_2)_n$-; $-CH_2O(CH_2)_n$-; $-CH_2NH$-; benzyl, $-C(R^2)=CH$-; $-CH_2CH(OH)$-; or thiazol-2,5-diyl;

Y is –S-S-; $-(CH_2)_n$-; -O-; -NH-; $-N(R^2)$-; -CH=CH-; -NHC(O)NH-; $N(R^2)C(O)N(R^2)$-; $-N[CH_2C_6H_3(OCH_3)_2]$-; $-N(CH_2C_6H_5)$-; $-N(CH_2C_6H_5)C(O)N(CH_2C_6H_5)$-; -N(alkoxyalkyl)-; N(cycloalkyl-methyl)-; 2,6-pyridyl; 2,5-furanyl; 2,5-thienyl; 1,2-cyclohexyl; 1,3-cyclohexyl; 1,4-cyclohexyl; 1,2-naphthyl; 1,4-naphthyl; 1,5-naphthyl; 1,6-naphthyl; biphenylen; or 1,2-phenylen,1,3-phenylen and 1,4-phenylen, wherein the phenylen groups are optionally substituted by 1 – 4 substituents, selected from halogen, lower alkyl, lower alkoxy, hydroxy, carboxy, -COO-lower alkyl, nitrilo, 5-tetrazol, (2-carboxylic acid pyrrolidin-1-yl)-2-oxo-ethoxy, N-hydroxycarbamimidoyl, 5-oxo[1,2,4]oxadiazolyl, 2-oxo-

[1,2,3,5]oxathiadiazolyl, 5-thioxo[1,2,4]oxadiazolyl and 5-tert-butylsulfanyl-[1,2,4]oxadiazolyl;

X' is $-(CH_2)_n-$; $-(CH_2)_nCH(R^2)-$; $-(CH_2)_nOCH_2-$; $-NHCH_2-$; benzyl, $-CH=C(R^2)-$; $-CH(OH)CH_2$; or thiazol-2,5-diyl;

R^2 is lower alkyl, lower alkoxy or benzyl and

n is 0-3,

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or mono- or diester thereof.

11. Use according to claim 10, wherein the D-proline is (R)-1-[6-(R)-2-Carboxy-pyrrolidin-1-yl]-6-oxo-hexanoyl] pyrrolidine-2-carboxylic acid or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or mono- or diester thereof.

12. Use according to claim 2, wherein the agent comprises a substituted or unsubstituted D-proline or stereoanalogue thereof.

13. A method for treatment or prevention of osteoarthritis in a subject, which comprises administering to the subject a therapeutically effective amount of a medicament comprising an agent capable of inhibiting SAP ligand binding activity or depleting SAP from the plasma of the subject.